

From: CityAttorney
Sent: Monday, January 6, 2025 10:21 AM
To: CityClerk
Cc: Karen Baldwin; Alma Valenzuela; Dawn McIntosh
Subject: FW: AGENDA Item 28 January 7, 2025

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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FYI, from Trina Rufo.

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From: Trina Rufo <trinarufo@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 6, 2025 10:14 AM
To: Council District 1 <District1@longbeach.gov>; Council District 3 <District3@longbeach.gov>; Council District 4 <District4@longbeach.gov>; Council District 5 <District5@longbeach.gov>; Council District 7 <District7@longbeach.gov>; Council District 8 <District8@longbeach.gov>; Council District 9 <District9@longbeach.gov>; City Manager <CityManager@longbeach.gov>; CityAttorney <CityAttorney@longbeach.gov>; Mayor <Mayor@longbeach.gov>; Council District 2 <District2@longbeach.gov>; Council District 6 <District6@longbeach.gov>
Subject: AGENDA Item 28 January 7, 2025

-EXTERNAL-

City Clerk – Please include the following in the official record. Thank you.

Dear Council Members,

As we embark on the new year, the Long Beach City Council once again has the opportunity to listen to its residents and make meaningful improvements to the lives of those who call this city home.

Today, the matter at hand is the STR (short-term rental) ordinance and its proposed amendments (Item 28, January 7, 2025). I sincerely hope this issue will receive the attention it deserves, along with an informed and thoughtful discussion by the Council.

After reviewing the proposed amendments, I see that many of them are beneficial. However, there are still several areas where opportunities have been missed to improve the clarity, structure, and understanding of the rules for hosting STRs in our neighborhoods.

I was prompted to address this matter as a resident of Cal Heights, after being made aware of a particular listing. You can view it here: The actual street address is 3633 Lime Ave Long Beach- it is NOT in Signal Hill as they have it advertised.

[STR listing on](#)

[Airbnb. \[https://www.airbnb.com/rooms/1275584338341396546?viralityEntryPoint=1&unique_share_id=0E9CE96F-FC81-4903-9254-DB83A1E3FF29&slcid=4c448e4de37f485eab100f2b4eeb8da0&s=76&feature=share&adults=16&channel=native&slug=IAduqWNg&source_impression_id=p3_1735932002_P3z-JzbFI-WA75ZC&quests=1\]\(https://www.airbnb.com/rooms/1275584338341396546?viralityEntryPoint=1&unique_share_id=0E9CE96F-FC81-4903-9254-DB83A1E3FF29&slcid=4c448e4de37f485eab100f2b4eeb8da0&s=76&feature=share&adults=16&channel=native&slug=IAduqWNg&source_impression_id=p3_1735932002_P3z-JzbFI-WA75ZC&quests=1\)](https://www.airbnb.com/rooms/1275584338341396546?viralityEntryPoint=1&unique_share_id=0E9CE96F-FC81-4903-9254-DB83A1E3FF29&slcid=4c448e4de37f485eab100f2b4eeb8da0&s=76&feature=share&adults=16&channel=native&slug=IAduqWNg&source_impression_id=p3_1735932002_P3z-JzbFI-WA75ZC&quests=1)

As you can see, this STR listing is advertising accommodations for 16+ guests on Airbnb, and 19 on VRBO! This already violates the current rules.

Furthermore, the listing claims to be located in Signal Hill, but it is actually in Cal Heights, according to neighbors on Lime Ave. (The true address is 3633 Lime Ave, as indicated by your own website). As you know, Signal Hill has banned STRs and does not regulate them, making enforcement impossible in this case.

Additionally, this listing fails to provide the required registration number, which is another violation of city rules. There may be other issues as well.

Despite numerous complaints being filed about this listing, nothing has changed. As a result, the Cal Heights neighborhood is now forced to consider a petition to ban STRs in the area due to the city's lack of enforcement. I believe this petition will gain significant support, particularly because of the various local issues—such as concerns about the airport, the large development project on Wardlow, and the new bike lane on Orange—that have already mobilized residents. The frustration is widespread.

A complaint should automatically trigger a clear, publicly accessible enforcement process. The community deserves to be able to easily track the progress of such complaints and see that action is taken. By failing to enforce STR rules, the city is allowing a few irresponsible hosts to tarnish the entire system. While I am not an Airbnb host myself, I believe there are responsible non-hosted STRs in Cal Heights. However, given the lack of enforcement, I am personally opposed to non-hosted STRs at this time. A host on-site creates a form of self-regulation that does not exist when the host is absent.

Additionally, I would like to bring up the issue of STR arbitrage, which may be relevant to this particular listing. The city's STR ordinance is designed to "provide residents an opportunity to generate income." But how does arbitrage fit into this goal? Arbitrage occurs when a middleman rents a property from a landlord, then sublets it as a short-term rental—sometimes without even being physically present in the

city. This is a misuse of the intended purpose of the STR ordinance, and the city should address this issue in the upcoming revisions.

For instance, an arbitrageur might rent a unit for \$3,000 a month and list it on STR platforms for \$400 a night, potentially earning \$12,000 if fully booked. After subtracting expenses like cleaning, maintenance, and management fees, they may still profit, but the system ultimately benefits someone who is not a Long Beach resident. The city needs to consider how this practice fits with its goals for local residents.

I would also like to point out that many landlords in California, due to high eviction costs and the state's housing crisis, are turning their properties over to arbitrageurs. This means they receive a guaranteed monthly payment, while the arbitrageur takes on the risks of managing a short-term rental. However, this system often exacerbates the lack of affordable housing and impacts local neighborhoods.

Now, regarding this specific listing: Is it possible that the host submitted a false application to bypass the rules? I urge you to investigate whether they provided misleading information to get approval, only to ignore the restrictions once they were up and running. If that's the case, will these individuals be banned?

Moving on to the proposed amendments: While there are many positive changes, I would like to raise a few additional points:

1. **Clarity on the maximum number of guests:** Is it eight or ten? Please provide clear guidelines on this issue.
2. **Enforcement for repeat offenders:** I support allowing hosts to correct violations, but I believe some hosts should be permanently banned from operating an STR in the city, especially if they have deliberately attempted to circumvent the rules (as with the example above).
3. **Local emergency contacts:** I disagree with removing the word "local" when referring to emergency contacts. The goal of the ordinance, as stated on the city website, is to "safeguard the residents of Long Beach by ensuring that STR activities do not threaten the character of residential neighborhoods." Local emergency contacts ensure accountability and better responsiveness. I urge you to reconsider removing this provision.

Again, it seems that DISTRICT 5 seems to have a bucket full of MAJOR issues that need serious attention, an ear to truly listen and real help and change from those that have been elected to do just that. The issues with the GA flight schools that have exploded over the past 3 years, the housing building at Cerritos/Wardlow, the Bike Lane on Orange Ave and now this- NON HOSTED STR's . We definitely need to see our elected officials stepping up to benefit the citizens and not the city machine.

In conclusion, I hope this issue receives the attention and thoughtful debate it deserves. If not, expect to see more petitions like the one in Cal Heights in the coming months- and the constituents mobilizing together. We need stronger enforcement and clearer regulations to protect our neighborhoods and residents. It simply cannot continue to be the wild west at the expense of those that live here.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Trina Rufo

District 5